Priesthood and Presidency

Claims of the "Josephite" or "Reorganized" Church, examined and Compared with Reason and Revelation.

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BY ELDER CHAS. W. PENROSE.

On the 6th of April, 1860, a meeting was held at Amboy, Illinois, composed of a small number of persons, most, if not all of whom had seceded from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They had assembled at the call of Zenos H. Gurley and Reuben Newkirk, and came from Wisconsin, Illinois, and Michigan. At this so-called "Conference" Joseph Smith (son of the martyred Prophet who was slain at Carthage, June 27, 1844) presented himself and expressed his willingness to accept the position of their leader. He had been several times invited to assume that position and now complied with the request. He was received with great joy, and after making a brief address, in which he pledged himself to promulgate no doctrine that should not be approved by them, the people assembled accepted him as a Prophet and the successor of his deceased father; the President of the assembly, William Marks, saying, "Brother Joseph, I present this Church to you in the name of Jesus Christ." Mr. Smith took the present thus tendered and he was ordained President of the High Priesthood and President of the Church by William Marks, Zenos H. Gurley, Samuel Powers and W. W. Blair. The religious society of which the present Joseph Smith was thus made President is commonly known as "The Josephite Church," but is called by its members "The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

The term "Reorganized" implies and is a confession

that the society which invented and adopted it is not the original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. That was organized April 6th, 1830, at Fayette, Seneca Co., New York, afterwards had its headquarters at Kirtland, Ohio, then at Independence, Missouri, next at Far West, Missouri, following that at Nauvoo, Illinois, and subsequently at Salt Lake City, Utah, where it still remains.

But it is claimed that the original Church, established by revelation from God through Joseph Smith the Martyr, became disorganized at his death. Also that it was rejected by the Almighty with its dead. And further, that on the decease of the first President of the Church no one could legally succeed him in that office but his eldest son. Therefore that which was the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on June 27th, 1844, was not the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on June 28th, 1844! By what process an organization so perfect in all its departments and offices and councils and quorums, with branches in various parts of the United States, and also in Europe and on the Isles of the Sea, could become disorganized because its chief presiding officer was slain, has not been made to appear. Certainly there have been from that day to the present no signs or evidences of disorganization in that religious body. It has been preserved intact, with its name, doctrines, ordinances, priesthood, vital force, mission work, unity, gifts, powers, spirit and growth, and is today recognized as the most splendid and perfect ecclesiastical organization on the face of the earth.

Consideration of the singular claims set up by the disciples of the "Reorganization" would be superfluous in view of their absurdity, were it not for the fact that a number of worthy men and women have been deceived

by the sophistry and perversions resorted to by advocates of "Josephism." Its leading spirits are chiefly persons who have been excommunicated from the Church of Christ for apostacy and other offenses. It would be labor in vain to point out to them their inconsistencies and egregious errors. But people who have been led into acceptance of their foolish theories by the advancement of some principles which are true, scriptural and essential, and have thus been drawn by a glimmering of light into mists and darkness, may be rescued and guided into the straight and narrow way where the sun shines in its fulness, by a plain presentation of simple truths and a refutation of cunning falsehoods. It is for their benefit that these lines are written.

First, let us examine the grounds on which it is asserted that the Church established by the Prophet Joseph has been disorganized and rejected. For, if they are untenable, the claims of the "Reorganization" have no basis. If there has been no disorganization, there can be no valid reason for a reorganization. At the death of Joseph Smith the First Presidency of the Church consisted of Joseph Smith, President, Sidney Rigdon, Counselor. William Law, the other Counselor, had been excommunicated. The martyrdom disorganized that council or quorum, but did that disorganize the Church? If so, then the Church will be disorganized whenever its President shall be removed by death or otherwise. There is nothing in the revelations of God or the order of the priesthood which justifies such a palpable absurdity. On that hypothesis, when Jesus Christ was slain his Church was disorganized. Also if the "Reorganized" Church shall lose its present President it will become disorganized. An institution which would be subject to dissolution in such a manner would have no claim to divine origin, and

would be a most miserable kind of human establishment, more like the product of lunacy than the result of ordinary reason, to say nothing of divine revelation.

The Church organized April 6th, 1830, continued after the death of its first President under the direction of the Twelve Apostles for about three and a half years, when the First Presidency was reorganized. This procedure has been repeated at the decease of each of the first Presidents who have succeeded each other, and the Church has moved forward along the lines marked out by revelation, without interruption, and without a sign or symptom of disorganization.

It is evident from the revelations of God in former and latter times in reference to his Church and Kingdom to be set up in the last days that it was to be perpetuated, and in that respect to be different from his work in previous dispensations. Through the wickedness of mankind the authority of the Holy Priesthood was repeatedly taken from the earth, but God's crowning work for the redemption of the earth was to be "The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times," in which all things in Christ both in heaven and on earth were to be gathered in one. (Eph. i: 10.) The kingdom which God was to set up in the latter days was not to be "left to other people." It was never to be destroyed. (Daniel ii: 44.) This assurance the Lord has frequently given to his Church and Kingdom established by his authority on April 6th, 1830. In a revelation given in September, 1830, he said:

"Unto whom I have committed the keys of my kingdom and a dispensation of the Gospel for the last times and for the fulness of times," etc. (Doc. & Cov. Section 27: 13.)

In December, 1830, he said:

"Fear not little flock, the kingdom is yours until I come. (Doc. & Cov. Sec. 35: 27.)

On January 2, 1831, he said:

"Behold the kingdom is yours and the enemy shall not overcome." (Doc. & Cov. Sec. 38: 9.)

In July 23, 1837, the Lord said concerning his servants:

"For unto you (the Twelve) and those (the First Presidency) who are appointed with you to be your counselors and your leaders is the power of this Priesthood given, for the last days and for the last time, in the which is the dispensation of the fulness of times." (Doc. & Cov. Section 112: 30.)

The disorganization of the Church would be a virtual contradiction of God's own promises and predictions. It is clear that he did not intend to permit his Church to be thrown down, destroyed, overcome, disorganized or left to other people. It was to "stand forever." A reorganization therefore would be superfluous and indeed an absurdity.

Now as to the alleged "rejection" of the Church: When the Saints, after the expulsion from Missouri had settled at Commerce, Illinois, and begun to build up Nauvoo, they were commanded of the Lord to build a Temple to his name. That was a commandment which the Lord says is always given to his people. The ordinances in behalf of the dead are to be administered in a Temple, and things kept hid from the foundation of the world and those pertaining to the dispensation of the fulness of times are to be revealed in holy places, where are to be "the oracles" and also "statutes and judgments" for the foundation of Zion, and the anointings and washings and further ordinances which the Lord

promised to reveal therein. The erection of that Temple was urged upon the people. The Lord foreseeing what would take place with his servants Joseph and Hyrum, it was necessary that his people should be stirred up to diligence in the performance of that work. He therefore declared that he granted unto them a sufficient time to build that house, and said:

"If you do not these things at the end of the appointment, ye shall be rejected as a Church with your dead, saith the Lord your God." (Doc. & Cov. Sec. 124: 25-41.)

It is claimed by the so-called "Reorganized" Church that the Saints, with the Twelve Apostles at their head and all the quorums of the Holy Priesthood and all the institutions established by the Almigty "for the last days and for the last time," were rejected of God and cast out and deprived of the means of salvation for themselves and their dead ancestors back through all previous generations, because they did not "complete" the Temple in Nauvoo. Now it is a matter of history that notwithstanding the opposition of the enemies of the Church, the murder of the Prophet and Patriarch, the threatenings and plots and ragings of mobocrats, and the scantiness of means for the great work before them, the Saints went to with their might and built that house according to the commandment of the Lord and the pattern revealed to Joseph Smith, which with all the keys and authority and power of the Holy Priesthood he had given to the Twelve, and that it was so far completed before the exodus from that city that it was dedicated to the Lord, and baptisms for the dead were performed in the sacred font, and washings, anointings, endowments and other ordinances were solemnized therein, both for the living and for the dead.

But, it is objected by the "Reorganizers" that the Temple was not fully "completed," and Brigham Young is quoted as saying after his arrival in Utah, that the Saints would attempt to build a Temple, and that "This has been attempted several times, but we have never yet had the privilege of completing and enjoying one." Our very technical and disputatious opponents are never tired of repeating in this connection the words "complete" and 'completed." But a careful examination of the word of the Lord fails to discover those words or anything equivalent to them. The Lord told his people to build a house to him; they did build and use it for the purposes he designed. They were not permitted to remain and enjoy it. There were, probably, some additions which would have been made to "complete" the edifice in the full sense of the term, if the builders had remained to enjoy it. A man might build a house, and before the finishing touches, adornments, painting, decorations, etc., were completed, he might be compelled to leave it, or it might be destroyed, but the house would be "built" all the same, and he or the person he employed to erect it would be called its builders, even if he never "enjoyed it." The Kirtland Temple was built but the people were not permitted to remain and enjoy it. The Saints who have been gathered to the Stakes of Zion in Utah have been permitted not only to build and "complete" four Temples after the pattern revealed to the Prophet Joseph and made known to his brethren in the Apostleship, but also to "enjoy" their occupancy and receive the oracles and revelations and manifestations from God which belong specially to those holy places. This would not have been their privilege if they had been "rejected as a Church with their dead."

It is surprising that sane people, however biased and

prejudiced, could entertain the notion that the just and merciful Father and the tender and loving Christ would reject the people who had toiled so faithfully to obey the commandment given them to build a Temple, because, before they could perfectly finish the structure after building it, in consequence of the inroad made upon them by their enemies they were compelled to forsake all their possessions for the Gospel's sake! Such a proceeding would be contrary to the course and character of Deity since the world began, and a contradiction of the word of God on this very subject in the same revelation in which the commandment was given. Here it is:

"Verily, verily I say unto you, that when I give a commandment to any of the sons of men to do a work unto my name, and those sons of men go with all their might and with all they have to perform that work and cease not their diligence, and their enemies come upon them and hinder them from performing that work, behold, it behooveth me to require that work no more at the hands of those sons of men, but to accept of their offerings, and the iniquity and transgression of my holy laws and commandments I will visit upon the heads of those who hindered my work unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not and hate me, saith the Lord your God. Therefore for this cause have I accepted the offerings of those whom I commanded to build up a city and a house unto my name in Jackson County, Missouri, and were hindered by their enemies, saith the Lord your God." (Doc. & Cov. Sec. 124: 49-51.)

It has been argued by persons who are not disposed to receive God's word when it is opposed to their own peculiar ideas, that this word of the Lord refers solely to those who were hindered from building a Temple in Jackson County, Missouri. That, however, would make the Lord a "respecter of persons" and a changeable being. The principle enunciated in the above quotation

is and must be of general application. It is not special to one particular occasion or one set of individuals. The Lord says: "When I give a commandment to ANY of the sons of men," etc. He further says, in verse 53, after speaking of the hindrance of the building of his house in Jackson County and its consequences: 'And this I make an example unto you," etc. God would be partial indeed if he accepted the offerings of the people in Jackson County because they were hindered by their enemies from performing that which he had commanded, and rejected the offering of His people in Nauvoo who accomplished so much more, and, with trowel in one hand and a weapon of defence in the other, ceased not their diligence but built the house of the Lord, and were then, like their brethren in Missouri, driven from their homes by blood-thirsty mobs who hated them for their devotion to the cause for which they were willing to sacrifice all things.

It is further contended that the expulsion from Illinois and the privations and sufferings endured by the Saints in their journey to the Rocky Mountains are evidence that the Church was rejected of the Lord. On that hypothesis the Church must have been rejected of God at a very early date. What about the persecutions in Ohio, the drivings and plunderings and butcheries in Missouri? Were they proofs that the Lord had rejected his people? By that kind of reasoning Christ was rejected of God when he hung upon the cross; the Apostles and Saints of the first century of the Christian era and the prophets of old who were "stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the sword, afflicted, tormented, wandering in deserts, in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth," were rejected of God. Those who indulge in such contentions forget the Apostle's declaration: "They

that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

In a pamphlet published by the so-called "Reorganized" church on the subject of the rejection, it is argued that the Lord "rejected Judah for their sins," but that he "did not cast them off forever nor destroy their kingdom, nor take from them the Priesthood." And it announces, "We hold that he has so rejected his Church." On that reasoning, then, the Church has not been disorganized, therefore it could not be reorganized. If it has been rejected for the sins of many of its people, when they repent and turn to the Lord it is that people, that Church, they who bear that Holy Priesthood that will be received again to the Lord's favor, as it was with Judah of old. It will not be another church, another people, a new organization, but the same Church, the same people, the same Priesthood, the same Kingdom which God set up for the last days and for the last time, and which he declared should not be overcome of the world. On their own reasoning, therefore, the "Reorganizers" have no status as the Church of Christ.

In meeting this alleged argument, it is not admitted for a moment that the Lord rejected the Church which he established with a promise of its perpetuity, nor that any but a minority of its members went into transgression, nor that the authority and keys of the Holy Priesthood were taken away, nor that the Lord in permitting his people to be removed to the "Tops of the mountains," designed any affliction to come upon his people except for their benefit and the magnifying of his Church in the eyes of the nations. He has fulfilled in their history in the Vales of Utah the sayings of the prophets concerning Zion: "The wilderness and the solitary place have been made glad for them." "Springs have burst forth and waters in the desert." "The branch of the Lord is made

beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth is excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel." "The Spirit has been poured out from on high;" "The work of righteousness is peace;" God's people "dwell in sure dwellings and quiet resting places; they sow beside all waters." "The eyes of the blind have been opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped." "The lame leap as the hart; the tongue of the dumb is made to sing." The Lord has lifted up "an ensign on the mountains" where the house of the Lord is reared, and people from all nations are flowing unto it. "Zion that brought good tidings has gone up into the high mountain," and "the time to favor her, yea the set time is come." These are the sayings of ancient seers, notably of Isaiah the Prophet, and they are being fulfilled in the Zion of the Lord of the latter days, the Church which he established in 1830, and which has never been disorganized or rejected or overcome. There is and can be but one Church of the true and living God on earth, and in that alone is full and complete salvation, exaltation and eternal life.

Let us now consider the claim that at the death of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, Seer and Revelator, no one could legally succeed him but his oldest son. This is based first on the alleged doctrine of lineage in the Priesthood; second on a revelation given January 19, 1841, in reference to a blessing upon Joseph Smith and his posterity; third on a revelation given in February, 1831, in reference to the power of appointment given to the Prophet Joseph; fourth, on reported statements that Joseph the Prophet "appointed" or "ordained" or "promised" that his son Joseph should succeed him as President.

As to lineage in the Priesthood: W. W. Blair, First

Counselor to Joseph the son of Joseph the Prophet, held that the Priesthood given to the latter must needs descend to the former, because the Lord declared on December 6th, 1832:

"Therefore, thus saith the Lord unto you with whom the Priesthood has continued through the lineage of your fathers—for ye are lawful heirs according to the flesh and have been hid from the world with Christ in God—therefore your life and the Priesthood hath remained and must needs remain through you and your lineage until the restoration of all things spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets since the world began."

This has been quoted by many others of the "Reorganized" church, and they make a point of inserting in brackets the words "Joseph the Martyr," which are not in the revelation, (see Doc. & Cov. Section 86; 8-10.) By this means they pervert the word of the Lord and turn it from its true signification. The first verse of that revelation says: "Verily thus saith the Lord unto you my servants." It was spoken to those who held the Priesthood in the Church in December, 1832. It simply shows that their fathers, many generations ago, held this Priesthood, and that it had come down to them in this last dispensation and in the same way would remain in their lineage. It was not special to Joseph Smith or any one individual. It does not convey the idea that his oldest son or any of his sons or the sons of the other Elders of the Church, to whom with him the promise was made, should succeed to the Priesthood which they held. If any of their posterity in generations to come receive and magnify that Priesthood, it will remain in their lineage just as it remained in the lineage of the ancients.

But supposing the promise is to be understood that

all or any of the sons of those men shall receive and enjoy the Priesthood which their fathers held, even then it would have no bearing upon the power of Presidency. The right to preside does not inhere in the authority of Priesthood. A man may hold all the authority of the Priesthood without having the right to preside. This is clearly defined in the later revelations of God to the Church, and indeed was shown from the beginning. Joseph Smith was a Prophet, a Seer, a Revelator and an Apostle of Jesus Christ by divine appointment and ordination; he was President of the Church through the acceptance and vote and common consent of the Church. He would have held all the power and authority pertaining to his Apostleship and prophetic calling if he had not been received by the people at all. But he could not have presided without the vote and faith and fellowship and common consent of the Church. Presidency does not come by lineage. No one has any right of Presidency because of illustrious ancestry, or official position held by a progenitor.

Another passage in the Doctrine and Covenants is relied upon and frequently quoted by the disciples of the "Presidency by lineage" theory. It is this:

"The order of this Priesthood was confirmed to be handed down from father to son, and rightly belongs to the literal descendants of the chosen seed to whom the promises were made," etc.

It will be seen from the context that this has no reference whatever to Presidency, nor does it relate to any office in the Priesthood but that of Patriarch. The quotation we have cited is in Doc. & Co. Sec. 107, verse 40. It is preceded, in verse 39, by these instructions:

"It is the duty of the Twelve in all large branches

of the Church to ordain Evangelical ministers as they shall be designated unto them by revelation."

The revelation then goes on to say:

"The order of this Priesthood was confirmed to be handed down from father to son," etc.

The order of which Priesthood? The order of the Evangelists, of course. Joseph the Prophet said that this term referred to Patriarchs and this is manifest in the following verses from 41 to 57, which show that this part of the duty of the Twelve consisted solely of ordaining Patriarchs as designated unto them by revelation. Verse 58 says:

"It is the duty of the Twelve also to ordain and set in order all the other officers of the Church," etc.

The use made of this revelation by those who wrest it to conform to their mistaken theory is one more instance of their repeated perversions of the word of God.

The chief reliance, however, of the "Lineage" advocates is placed on the revelation given January 19th, 1841:

"For this anointing I have put upon his head, that his blessing shall also be put upon the head of his posterity after him. And as I said unto Abraham concerning the kindreds of the earth, even so I say unto my servant Joseph, in thee and in thy seed shall the kindred of the earth be blessed." (Doc. & Cov. Sec. 124: 57, 58.)

In quoting this isolated portion of that revelation without the context which shows its true signification, they still further pervert the word of the Lord. In the various publications issued for the purpose of making it appear that these promises of the Lord had reference to the oldest son of the Prophet, the words "of Priesthood, authority and calling" are placed in brackets after the words "his blessing" in the revelation; also in brackets

the words "first, eldest" after the word "head" in the revelation, thus endeavoring to influence the reader and warp his understanding.

This part of the revelation of January 19, 1841, cannot be correctly understood without reading verses 56 to 61. From these it will be perceived that the blessing put upon the head of Joseph the Prophet and upon his posterity or "seed" after him, was the privilege of having a place from generation to generation in the Nauvoo House, to be built by subscriptions of stock as provided for in the revelation from verses 56 to 212. The portion of the word of the Lord contained in those verses relates solely to that theme—the building of "a house for the boarding of strangers," "a delightful habitation for man, a resting place for the weary traveler that he might contemplate the glory of Zion." It has not the remotest application to Priesthood or Presidency or succession in anything, but the right of Joseph the Prophet and his posterity to have place in that house. The Lord gave a promise to Joseph Smith, as he did to Abraham concerning his seed: "In thee and in thy seed shall the kindred of the earth be blessed," and he adds: "THEREFORE, let my servant Joseph and his seed after him have place in that house from generation to generation for ever and ever, saith the Lord."

The promise of God to Joseph the Prophet concerning his "seed," it will be seen, was simply the same that he made to Abraham. It was also made and has been made to others who obtained the Priesthood. In Doc. & Cov. Sec. 110, which gives an account of visions manifested in the Kirtland Temple, we read:

"After this Elias appeared and committed the dispensation of the Gospel of Abraham, saying that in *us*, and *our* seed, all generations after us should be blessed."

Thus the promise which the "Lineage" advocates contend belonged only to the son of Joseph the Prophet, is one that belongs to the posterity of other servants of God who are endowed with the authority and power of the Holy Priesthood. But it must be remembered that no blessing pronounced upon such a servant of God can be enjoyed by any of his posterity, except through their own faithfulness and obedience to the commandments of God. Neither is it peculiar to the eldest of the lineage except in the office of Patriarch, which has already been explained, and in the line of the Aaronic Priesthood, as revealed in Doc. & Cov. Sec. 68 and in the law of Moses. The term "anointing," on the head of Joseph, refers to the manner of blessing by the holy anointing which is poured on the head of the recipient. If any of his posterity prove worthy to receive that anointing it will be placed on their head, as all blessings which come either by anointing or the laying on of hands are placed, even as Jacob of old put the blessing of his son Joseph "on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." (Gen. 49: 26; also 48: 13-20.)

The notion that a blessing put upon the head of a man's posterity means simply upon his oldest son is absurd on its face. If the words "the head of his posterity" mean his oldest son what is meant by Joseph's "head?" On such a rule it would mean his father, of course, and thus Joseph the Seer himself would be left out entirely. Careful investigation of the blessings that flowed to Abraham's posterity, to his "seed after him," will show that they rarely were possessed by the oldest son in the family descent; and it must not be forgotten that the blessing on the head of Joseph the Prophet and on the head of his posterity was similar in respect to descent to that of Abraham and his posterity, and of

other men whom God called and ordained in opening up his last dispensation and promised to "their seed after them through all generations;" and, as has been demonstrated, in none of these cases, ancient or modern, does the blessing or anointing or promise have any reference to the right of Presidency. That is another and entirely different matter and conferred in a different manner.

Now as to the alleged appointment or ordination or prediction upon "Little Joseph" by his martyred father: There is not anything in all the purported sayings and doings of the Prophet Joseph which justify the conclusion jumped at by "Josephites." That Joseph the Prophet blessed his son will be conceded. Every man of God holding the Melchisedek Priesthood has the right to bless his children. Under the inspiration of the Spirit of the Lord he may predict that the Priesthood he holds shall be inherited by his posterity, but that inheritance is always predicated on the obedience of the recipient to the law of the Lord and his submission to the rules and regulations that govern the Priesthood. He must "come in at the gate," as the Lord has ordained and obtain his blessings at the hands of the appointed authority. (Doc. & Cov. Sec. 43: 7.) Whatever may be vaguely claimed by the over-zealous supporters of the present Joseph Smith, he has not, so far as has been published, professed to have been ordained by his father to preside over the Church as his successor. On the contrary, in an interview with him at Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, March 18, 1896, the following questions were propounded and answers received:

Q. "Do you claim to be a prophet?"
A. "Yes, I claim the same authority as my father.

Q. "Did your father ordain you to be a prophet and lead the Church?"

A. "No he did not; he blessed me but did not ordain me to any office that I know of."

There were present at this interview Elders Samuel G. Spencer, William E. Criddle, Eugene S. Hart and Archibald G. Young, of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, each and all of whom certify to the correctness of these questions and responses, which has never been denied, although the gentleman interviewed has denied seeing, before they were published, the questions and answers following those we have given in the long interview that was held and which appeared in full in the *Deseret Evening News* of July 1st, 1896.* But even if he should claim any such ordination or appointment, it would not stand for a moment as against the order established by revelation from God through his father for the government of the Church, which we will now consider.

In the first years of the childhood of the Church there were numerous attempts on the part of enthusiastic persons to regulate its affairs by visions, or "tongues," or revelations they claimed to have received. It became necessary, therefore, to warn the Church against accepting anything for that purpose except through the head. In September, 1830, the Lord said:

"Behold, verily, verily I say unto thee, no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this Church except my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., for he receiveth them even as Moses. * * * For I have given him the keys of the mysteries and the revelations which are sealed, until I shall appoint unto them another in his stead." (Doc. & Cov. Sec. 28: 2, 7.)

In February, 1831, the Lord said:

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* See appendix.

"And this ye shall know assuredly that there is none other appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he be taken if he abide in me. But verily, verily I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him, for if it be taken from him he shall not have power except to appoint another in his stead." (Doc. & Cov. Sec. 43: 3, 4.)

It will be seen from the dates of these revelations that they were given before the Church was thoroughly organized in all its quorums and councils, and before Joseph the Prophet had been tested and proved, to see whether he would "abide" in the Lord. But after the Council of the Twelve Apostles had been organized, to hold the keys of the Kingdom to open the door to all nations, and after Joseph had been tried and proven, the Lord said to the Twelve:

"The keys which I have given unto him and also to youward shall not be taken from him till I come." (Sec. 112: 15.)

This harmonizes with the revelation in March, 1833:

"Verily I say unto you, the keys of this kingdom shall never be taken from you while thou art in the world nor in the world to come. Nevertheless through you shall the oracles be given to another, yea even unto the Church; and all they who receive the oracles of God, let them beware how they hold them," etc. (Doc. & Cov. Section 90: 2-5.)

The order of the Priesthood and the governing authority in the Church are set forth in Section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The powers of the Melchisedek or High Priesthood and of the Aaronic or Lesser Priesthood are therein defined. The order of Presidency is also explained, and it is shown that:

"Of necessity there are presidents or presiding offices growing out of or appointed of or from among those who are ordained to the several offices in these two Priesthoods. Of the Melchisedek Priesthood, three Presiding High Priests, chosen by the body, appointed and ordained to that office, and upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the Church, form a quorum of the Presidency of the Church. The Twelve Traveling Counselors are called to be the Twelve Apostles, or special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world, thus differing from other officers in the Church in the duties of their calling. And they form a quorum, equal in authority and power to the three Presidents previously mentioned."

From this it will be seen that three persons who have been appointed and ordained to the Melchisedek Priesthood and are Presiding High Priests, when chosen by the body and upheld by the confidence, faith and prayer of the Church constitute the Presidency of the Church. Joseph the Prophet was an Apostle and was therefore a Presiding High Priest. His counselors were also men appointed and ordained to the same calling. But each of them had to be chosen and upheld by the body in order that they might together preside over the Church. The Twelve Apostles, also Presiding High Priests, forming a Traveling Presiding High Council (verse 33) held authority "to build up the Church and regulate all the affairs of the same in all nations, under the direction of the First Presidency." Apostles are God's High Priests (Sec. 84: 63). When there is no First Presidency of three, the Twelve constitute a Council or Quorum "equal in authority and power to the three Presidents previously mentioned," and when so upheld by the Church can preside over it, regulate all its affairs, ordain and set in order all the other offices of the Church (verse 58) and thus the Church can be continued and per-

petuated, suffering no disorder, but carrying on the work under Jesus Christ who is its living head on high.

Previous to the death of Joseph the Prophet the Lord gave to the Church, by revelation, all the leading officers belonging to the Priesthood; providing, however, that they should be presented at the General Conference of the Church for approval or disapproval. After nominating the Patriarch, the President, and his two counselors, he named the Twelve Apostles, with Brigham Young as their President; also the High Council for the "corner stone" or Stake of Zion at Nauvoo, and the various minor officers in the Priesthood. Doc. & Cov. 124: 123-145. The Prophet and Patriarch were martyred, one of Joseph's counselors had been excommunicated, the other had so far gone astray that the Prophet had endeavored to repudiate him, and there was no First Presidency of three to stand at the head of the Church. But the Twelve, with President Brigham Young at their head, as a Traveling High Council, according to the word of the Lord, stepped forward as a quorum equal in authority and power to the Quorum of Three which had been dissolved, and presided over the Church by its vote, confidence, faith, prayer and fellowship. Thus all things were done in order and by "common consent." When the First Presidency of three High Priests was reorganized, December 5th, 1847, under and according to the duty of the Twelve, and subsequently upheld and sustained by the Church in General Conference, the revelation was fulfilled, as quoted above, namely: "Of necessity there are Presidents or Presiding Offices growing out of or appointed of or from among those who are ordained to the several offices in these two Priesthoods." Similar proceedings have followed at each dissolution of the First Presidency of Three, occasioned by the death of the President. Thus the

design and purpose of the Lord, repeatedly made known, that His Church and Kingdom should continue and never be destroyed, given to other people, or be overcome of the world, have been maintained, and the power and authority of the Melchisedek and Aaronic Priestshoods, with the presiding offices growing out of or from among them, have been magnified and blessed of the Almighty, and the fruits thereof bear evidence of their divinity.

The keys of the Kingdom are and have been with the Apostleship. No man has taken or aspired to the place of Joseph the Prophet. His position was assured to him by the Lord in this world and in the world to come. As with David Patten: 'His Priesthood no man taketh from him," though the Lord had taken David unto himself, but another could be "appointed to the same calling." (Section 124; 130). Joseph had prepared the Apostles for the burden that awaited them, by conferring upon them every key, power, gift, anointing and blessing which had been placed upon his head, so that the oracles might be given to the Church when he was taken away. The testimonies to this fact are numerous and incontrovertible. They were given in Nauvoo when Sidney Rigdon put forth his feeble claim to be "Guardian" of the Church. They are matters of history. President Wilford Woodruff has repeatedly related the circumstances which occurred when Joseph conferred those powers upon the Twelve. No one who knows Wilford Woodruff questions his truthfulness, honor and integrity. His word is as good as his bond, his simple statement as valid as his oath. The following is his latest testimony on this matter. It was given in the presence of ten or twelve thousand people at the General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City, Sunday afternoon April 10th, 1898:

"I feel thankful today that Joseph F. Smith is with us as a son of Hyrum Smith. He bears a true and faithful testimony of his father. I would to God that Joseph Smith had a son in the flesh who would do as Joseph F. Smith does here—bear a testimony to the truth of his father. The Prophet Joseph Smith has no son that stands in the midst of the Church of God and bears record of his father. He never has had; possibly never will have. I will give you a testimony here that will show you where I stand with regard to this matter. Joseph Smith never ordained his son Joseph, never blessed him nor set him apart to lead this Church and Kingdom on the face of the earth. When he or any other man says he did, they state that which is false before high heaven. The last speech that Joseph Smith ever made to the Quorum of the Apostles was in a building in Nauvoo, and it was such a speech as I never heard from mortal man before or since. He was clothed upon with the Spirit and power of God. His face was clear as amber. The room was filled as with consuming fire. He stood three hours upon his feet. Said he: 'You Apostles of the Lamb of God have been chosen to carry out the purposes of the Lord upon the earth. Now, I have received, as the Prophet, Seer and Revelator, standing at the head of this dispensation, every key, every ordinance, every principle and every Priesthood that belongs to the last dispensation and fulness of times. And I have sealed all these things upon your heads. Now, you Apostles, if you do not rise up and bear off this kingom, as I have given it to you, you will be damned."

It is claimed by the disciples of the present Joseph Smith that the presiding authority after the death of the Prophet and Patriarch was with the High Council in Nauvoo, and they quote these instructions of the Prophet to the Apostles:

"The Twelve will have no right to go into Zion or any of her Stakes, and there undertake to regulate the

affairs thereof where there is a standing High Council; but it is their duty to go abroad and regulate all matters relative to the different branches of the Church. When the Twelve are together, or a quorum of them, in any Church, they will have authority to act independently, and make decisions and those decisions will be valid. But where there is not a quorum they will have to do business by the voice of the Church. No standing High Council has authority to go into the Churches abroad and regulate the matters thereof, for this belongs to the Twelve."

The signification of these instructions can scarcely be misunderstood by any one who does not desire to misinterpret them. The standing High Councils in the Stakes of Zion are pronounced, in the revelation, equal in their respective decisions with each other and with those of the higher quorums, so far as the jurisdiction of the former extends. The Twelve as a Traveling High Council were not to interfere with the local affairs of any Stake of Zion, because each stake has its own local organization. But when the First Presidency of the Church was dissolved, the Quorum of the Twelve, as has been shown, became the chief presiding authority over all the Church. It was in that capacity that they acted and did business "by the voice of the Church." They did not supercede or take the place of or interfere with the duties of the High Council of the Stake of Zion at Nauvoo, but performed the functions of a Presiding Quorum over the entire Church, including all its Stakes and branches and quorums and councils, and were authorized to do this, not only by virtue of their calling, but by the united voice and vote of the several quorums in General Assembly, which constitute the spiritual authorities of the Church, from which there is no appeal. At a Council held in the Kirtland Temple, January 16th, 1836,

Joseph the Prophet corrected some misunderstandings in relation to the Apostles. In his history under that date he says:

"I next proceeded to explain the duty of the Twelve, and their authority which is next to the present Presidency, and that the arrangement of the Assembly in this place on the 15th inst, in placing the High Council of Kirtland next the Presidency, was because the business to be transacted was business relating to that body in particular, which was to fill the several quorums in Kirtland, not because they were first in office and that the arrangements were the most judicious that could be made on that occasion; also the Twelve are not subject to any other than the First Presidency, viz. myself, Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams who are now my counselors; (and where I am not there is no First Presidency over the Twelve.")

A standing High Council is not authorized to receive revelations or do business for the whole Church, nor for any part of the Church except that within the boundaries of the Stake in and for which it is appointed. The Traveling Presiding High Council, that is the Twelve Apostles, have authority to regulate the affairs of the Church in all nations. Under the First Presidency they may regulate affairs in a Stake of Zion, because the First Presidency preside over everything in the Church. When the Council of the Twelve becomes itself the chief Presiding Power, it can, as a quorum authorized by the voice of the Church, set in order all its affairs at home and abroad, precisely as the First Presidency of Three.

Advocates of "Josephism" cite some pretended revelations to their leader (previous to his accepting the "present" of the Church which they tendered to him) as evidence of his calling to the leadership of that body. They are, as related by himself, of a vague and shadowy

character and scarcely worth comment or notice. The most clearly defined of them is thus related by the present Joseph himself. After stating that he had a conversation with a person named Yates, who urged him to go to Utah, in August, 1856, he says he was meditating on the matter and asked the question: "Why should I not go to Utah?"

"I heard a slight noise like that of the breeze, that arrested my speech and my attention. I turned my gaze slightly upward, and saw descending towards me a sort of cloud, funnel-shaped, with the wide part upward. It was luminous and of such color and brightness that it was clearly seen, though the sun shone at its summer strength. It descended rapidly and settling upon and over me enveloped me completely so that I stood within its radiance. As the cloud rested upon the ground at my feet, the words 'Because the light where you stand is greater than their's' sounded in my ears clearly and distinctly. Slowly the cloud passed away and the vision closed."

Supposing this funnel-shaped manifestation was beheld exactly as described, what had that to do with the calling of its recipient to the Presidency of the Church? And what superior light had the son of the martyred Seer, at that time over the leaders of the Church who had remained with it from the beginning and had never turned away from it or forsaken it for a moment in the days of its severest trials and persecutions? At that time he had little or no light at all on the things of the Kingdom, and nothing that has emanated from him since has given evidence of extraordinary light on any subject. He and the organization by which he has to be led, although nominally its leader, is under a cloud, which may be "funnel-shaped," but is certainly not luminous. Such shadowy "revelations" are too flimsy and meaning-

less to impress anyone but persons who have drifted away from the "iron rod" and who eagerly grasp at a shadow.

Now let us contrast the order established by the Almighty for the stability, perpetuity and permanence on earth of His Church and Kingdom of the latter days, with the puerile, inconsistent and dubious theory of succession contended for by the so-called "Reorganization." In God's plan, the death, failure or apostacy of any of His servants entrusted with presiding power makes no difference to the continuation of his Church or the performance of any of its functions; in the "Josephite" scheme there is a disorganization of the Church at the dissolution of its presiding quorum. In the former there is no dependence upon the existence or conduct of the children of a President; in the latter everything in succession to the Presidency depends upon such a contingency. With the divine plan there is no break or suspension or hiatus; with the "Josephite" notion there must be at least an interregnum in case of the decease of the President, where there is no son old enough to succeed him. The true Melchisedek Presiding Priesthood is "without father, without mother, without descent;" the counterfeit depends on lineal succession. In the revelations of the Most High provisions are made by which if the enemy takes the life of the Presiding Quorum there is another equal to it in authority and four times greater than it in numbers, and if it were possible for the Twelve to be thus removed, a third body or quorum of still larger proportions and endowed, then, with the same powers, would come up in its place, presenting a yet broader front to the foe (Sec. 107: 25 26); in the "Lineage" theory, devised by disappointed men, all is a blank on the removal of the head. By the

continuation of the Church and Kingdom of God from April 6th, 1830 down to the present time and until Christ comes the promises and predictions of the Lord himself are and will be fulfilled; on the disorganization and reorganization theory they would fall to the ground and be falsified. In the perpetuation of the Church in its full authority, spirit, ordinances and gifts the wisdom mercy and justice of the Lord are exhibited; in the rejection theory God would appear as unjust, changeable, partial, a respector of persons, and oblivious to the faithful diligence of his people under the most trying circumstances and as indifferent to his own principles and promises.

In the Church thus perpetuated, the Apostleship and the keys and authority thereof have been continued in direct line without a break, through Joseph the Prophet, from Peter, James and John. In the so-called "Reorganization" there is no real Apostleship at all. The men who ordained the son of Joseph Smith were not even members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and when they were they were not Apostles and never had been. They could not confer that which they never possessed. In the true Church there are the keys to administer the sacred ordinances for the living and for the dead; in the "Josephite" Church there is no such power, and no ordinances for the dead are administered. Yet those ordinances are declared by the Prophet Joseph to be essential, not only for the salvation of the fathers, but also for our salvation, as neither can be made perfect without the other. (Doc. & Cov. Sec. 128 verse 15.) In the continued Church, Temples have been built and dedicated on the plan revealed to the Prophet Joseph, being made perfect in every particular; in the "Reorganized" Church there is no such Temple, no such

plan, no knowledge how to erect a Temple, no understanding of what is to be done in it even if erected. The Kirtland edifice, of which the Reorganization has laid hold, is not used for a Temple, but as a common meeting house. In the true Church there are order and discipline under competent authority; in the "Josephite" society there are disorder, confusion and continual contention, which Christ says is of the devil (III. Nephi xi: 29). In Christ's Church the head directs by divine authority, the Church being commanded to "receive and give heed unto all his words as if from the Lord's own mouth, in all patience and faith" (Sec. 21: 5); in the "Josephite" Church the head is under obligations not to teach anything except that which the members approve. In the Church established by the Lord through Joseph the Prophet, revelations are to be contiuously given for the guidance of the Church, and as late as January 19, 1841, the Lord said that one of the purposes of building the Temple that he always commanded his people to erect, was that he might reveal his ordinances therein, for he said, "I deign to reveal unto my Church things which have been kept hid from before the foundations of the world;" in the "Josephite" organization a limit is placed upon the revelations of God, and that body, in Conference assembled, passed this act of limitation:

'Resolved, that the whole law of the Church of Jesus Christ is contained in the Bible, Book of Mormon and Book of Doctrine and Covenants.

It will be observed that even the revelations which are contained in the book called the "Pearl of Great Price" are shut out by this cast-iron creed, and they were all given through Joseph the Seer long before his martyrdom.

The various and numerous objections, pretensions, disputations and contentions of the so-called "Reorganized" people might all be met and shown to have no more foundation in truth, reason and revelation than the claims touched upon in this exposition, but as they all turn on and depend upon this question of succession, they are not herein examined. If the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has continued, according to revelations and promises of the Almighty, from its organization to the present time, all that is alleged against it will amount to nothing. For, it contains within itself the power, authority and ability to rectify any wrong that may creep into it,to expunge any impurity that may arise within it, to cast off effete matter, if any there should be, to regulate all its own affairs, so that out of itself shall grow all offices or quorums which may be removed by death or transgression, to become independent of all other creatures beneath the celestial world, to carry on the work of redemption for the living and the dead, to fulfill all the prophecies concerning it and prepare a people for the coming and reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, who established it and has watched over it and guided it and has been with it in spirit from the beginning. Not one key, or ordinance, or gift, or principle which he bestowed upon it through Joseph the Prophet has been lost or taken away or suspended. The oracles are in it today and will remain while revelation is needed for the consummation of the great work comprehended in the dispensation of the fulness of times. Let those who have been deceived by the sophistry and errors of misguided men, come out from the mists and fogs and contentious spirit of the so-called "Reorganization," come to the clear light of Zion and receive the fulness of the blessings of the Gospel of peace!

APPENDIX.

INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH SMITH AND FOUR ELDERS OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

The following account was published in the *Deseret Evening News* of July 1, 1896:

CHICAGO, June 6th, 1896.

To the Editor:

By the request of many of our Elders and interested friends, and at the suggestion of Elder Joshua R. Clark, who has been presiding over the Northern States mission I herewith respectfully submit a verbatim copy of an interview between myself and Joseph Smith, President of the "Reorganized Church," March 18th, 1896, at Independence, Jackson County, Mo., in the house of Mr. Luff, one of the Reorganization's apostles.

There were present Elders Wm. E. Criddle, Eugene S. Hart. Archibald G. Young, of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, besides Joseph Luff, Joseph Smith and myself.

The questions and replies made were as follows:

Q. Do you claim to be a Prophet? A. Yes. I claim the same authority as my father.

Q. Did your father ordain you to be a Prophet and lead the Church? A. No, he did not. He blessed me but did not ordain me to any office that I know of.

Q. You say a "voice" told you to "join the Reorganized church?" Is it not possible that the "voice" was from a "seducing spirit"—a transformed devil—instead of from God? A. I heard a voice—but will not say whether it could be deceptive or not.

Here Joseph endeavored to explain to us that it would be unfair for us to expect him to say that it "could be possible" for the voice to have been deceptive, after his relying upon it for so many years, etc., etc.

Q. Who ordained you unto the apostleship? A. Marks, Blair and Gurley ordained me a High Priest.

Q. Did they hold the office of an Apostle? A. Marks was not an Apostle.

Q. If not, how could he give something he never had? A. I think one holding an office in the Melchisedek Priesthood can do so.

Q. Have you had any visions? A. Yes, sir; numbers of them.

Q. Have you ever seen an angel or heavenly personage? A. I

have seen angels—one came as a man, and sat by my bed, and gave me instructions about sickness—as to whether to get a doctor or not.

When closely questioned Joseph admitted that the "angel might have been a man"—perhaps one of the "Nephites," he could not say—he did not shake hands with the individual. He came in at the "open door and went out the same way."

Q. Did your mother ever deny that your father entered polygamy? A. Yes, sir; more than once.

Q. Did she ever deny to you that he had the revelation on celestial marriage? A. She said that she did not believe that he did; I do not believe that he did, but I do not know.

Mr. Luff here interrupted: "Can't you give more than a belief? Don't you remember that revelation you said you had?"

Here Joseph endeavored to satisfy his apostle by calling to mind an answer of the "spirit" in reference to this subject, which seemingly, he had failed to remember until cited (in a very peculiar way) by Mr. Luff.

Q. Do you believe that this principle will be practiced during the Millennium? A. I do not believe that it will, but I have no objections individually.

Q. If it is not, what will those do who have married one, two and three who have died? A. I do not know how that will be; I know nothing about whether we will have a wife there or not.

Q. Do you believe that you will assist us in building this grand temple, to be built in Jackson County, Mo.; in other words, do you believe the church you represent will ever unite with the original Church of Utah? A. I have no opinion to express. I am perfectly willing that the people of God should build it, and if I am permitted to help build it, all right.

Q. Can you honestly say before all men, and your Prophet-father (if you could meet him) and your God, that you know that the people of Utah are without authority to administer the Gospel ordinances? A. I believe that there are many in the Utah Church who have authority to administer in the Gospel, and the people whom they administer unto, I would not be surprised if they also held authority.

Q. Does President Woodruff hold authority? A. I do not like to pass upon individuals.

Q. Dare you say that you have authority to administer the ordinances of the Gospel? A. I believe that I have authority.

Q. Who would lead your church if you and one of your counselors should die? A. I have a theory that it would be upon the apostles.

Q. When Elijah informed Joseph the Seer that the time had fully come, spoken of by Malachi, how is it that there has been such a delay—with your church—in temple work, etc.? A. I do not know anything about that.

Q. Were not "endowments" and "baptisms" given and performed for the "dead" in the Prophet Joseph's day? A. Yes, they were.

Q. Have you ever inhabited the "Nauvoo house?" A. I have not.

Q. Do you or your posterity ever expect to possess it? A. The building is partly down, and, of course we cannot dwell in it.

Q. If you have failed to receive this promise, for reasons best known unto the Lord, is it not possible that you have also failed in the promise of the "seed," or priesthood, etc., etc.? A. Yes, it depends upon the worthiness of the individuals.

Q. Instead of Joseph the Seer leaving the "keys" with you, did he not take the "keys" with him—placing the oracles with the Church—the Apostles at the head, or, as Jesus gave: First, Apostles, etc.? A. Yes, they were the proper persons to take the lead at father's death.

Q. How many members have you in your church? A. About thirty-five thousand.

All the foregoing questions were formulated and written, with space left for answers, before we called on Joseph Smith; and the answers, although in one or two instances necessarily abbreviated (when they were long, and insufficient space had been left), are word for word as answered, finally, by him.

When leaving I bore my humble testimony to him that "I know the power, Priesthood and authority is with us, ten thousand times more convincingly than I know that I left my family at Utah!" I gave him my blessing and prayed that he may at one day see the "true light and be one with us."

I send this interview for publication, not to cause contention, or with a view of tearing down any person or persons, but that all may judge for themselves; and with a view and prayer that it may build up and fortify the minds of all who are anxious to know where the Priesthood, power and divine authority centers.

I have written this just as it occurred, and can vouch for its correctness. It is at your disposal.

SAMUEL G. SPENCER.

About July 15th the *Deseret News* received the annexed communication:

LAMONI, IOWA, July 9, 1896.

Publishers *Deseret News*, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Gentlemen—In your issue of July 1st, you have chosen to publish Elder S. G. Spencer's report of an interview with me at Independence, Mo., March 18th, 1896.

The heading is misleading, as it implies that the questions asked by Mr. Spencer was submitted to me, being written and I replied to them in a similar way.

No questions were submitted to me nor did I know that they were in written form; nor did I either write answers, or have any of the answers submitted to me after they were written. Mr. Spencer has misrepresented me in several of the answers; and as Mr. Spencer wrote you that his object in sending his version for publication was that all might "judge for themselves," I ask you for the same purpose to publish my version.

I wrote J. M. Stubbart, one of our Elders, in regard to it, and send a copy of what I wrote him.

I am in no sense afraid of the answers I did make to Mr. Spencer's questions, as I made them, nor of the logical consequences of them; but, I regret that men who came to me in ostensible kindness, and were courteously treated, should have misrepresented me, even in the slightest.

Please publish this letter and my version of that interview and oblige, Yours respectfully,

JOSEPH SMITH.

P. S. Mr. Spencer has taken advantage of what he stated to me was for personal information, and published without my consent.

The *News* also published with the foregoing these paragraphs addressed to J. M. Stubbart by Joseph Smith.

Yours of the 15th received. In reply: Messrs. S. G. Spencer, E. S. Hart, A. G. Young and W. E. Criddle were at Brother Joseph Luff's house, and Mr. Spencer did the talking. He asked me several questions, the form of which I do not remember. If he had them written I did not see them; but he certainly has not given the answers as I gave them. He had asked me for an interview, and I granted it. He brought the others with him at his own motion, and without consulting me. I had no thought he would misrepresent me. If he had the questions numbered and set down, I did not see them; nor were his minutes of what I said submitted to me for correction. I hoped he, nor either of them, would go away and lie about me.

* * * * * * * * * *

Those men are not at liberty to use, or misuse an interview with me, which Mr. Spencer said was for their own private benefit: Besides this, the elders are not bound by any absurd answers of mine to baffling questions contrary to the books of the Church. Yours in bonds.

The above is a reply of mine to Brother J. M. Stubbart, who sent me a copy of a list of questions said to have been used by Elder W. E. Criddle of Utah. As I never saw the written questions, nor yet the answers which they have given, in writing, for examination and indorsement, I am not bound by them either.

The editor wrote to Mr. Smith stating that the interview had been verified before publication and that gentleman sent this reply:

LAMONI, IOWA, July 25th, 1896.

Mr. John Q. Cannon. Salt Lake City, Utah.

Dear Sir:—Yours of July 20th at hand. I do not wish to be too intrusive, but the fact that the "Interview" published by you, and which is being circulated by the eldership under S. G. Spencer, does misrepresent me, I must request to be set right.

A proper verification of that interview would have required that Elder Joseph Luff and myself should have been permitted to see the answers and the questions as well, before it was published. The

statement that the answers were written "in the presence of all," is misleading, as it carries the idea that all, including Elder Luff and myself, knew what was written; which is not correct. Hoping for fair dealing, I am yours respectfully.

JOSEPH SMITH.

These effusions were sent to Elder S. G. Spencer eliciting the response given below:

KANSAS CITY, MO., July 24th, 1896.

To the Editor:

Dear Sir—Yours of the 20th at hand and contents noted, and manuscript of Mr. Joseph Smith, stating his version of interview, carefully perused.

The accusations and explanations made and endeavored by Mr. Smith are indeed very unbecoming his ecclesiastical claims. We see no reason why he seeks to deny the true answers as they have already been published. He states that we had the interview for our "own private benefit."

Why should he be afraid of the world's knowing what he admitted to us in "private?"

Since receiving your letter I have handed my journal, in which the interview is written, to Elder Eugene S. Hart, who carefully examined the same as I read your publication of it in the *News*; and there is no difference whatsoever that will change the meaning thereof. This was read in the presence of Elders C. Burton Jr. and W. F. Butt.

We are willing under oath to affirm that the questions (excepting one asked by Elder Young) were written and read to Elder Hart and others before going to Mr. Luff's residence; that Mr. Joseph Smith did know that the answers were written, as Elder Spencer held his journal on his knees, his fountain pen in his hand, and some of the answers were read to him after they were written; especially when it was one of which he seemingly tried to evade a direct answer, we asking, "Is that the answer you wish to give?" (repeating the answer). We distinctly remember the answer as to whether it was possible that the voice was of a seducing spirit, etc., being one among those that were read to him.

We declare in words of soberness, knowing full well that no "liar" shall inherit the kingdom of God, that the answers are complete to the questions asked in said interview, entirely free from any misleading feature.

And, no matter how Mr. Smith may scramble together fragments of reminiscences of the interview, he cannot succeed in denying the answers he gave us on that occasion, and we fail to see why he should attempt it. The same afternoon of the interview, the questions and answers were read at the mission office, Kansas City, Mo., to other Elders, in the presence of those who witnessed the interview.

(Signed) SAMUEL G. SPENCER,
EUGENE S. HART,
ARCHIBALD G. YOUNG,
W. E. CRIDDLE.

The unbiased reader will perceive that Mr. Smith does not make any specific denial or refutation of the statements furnished to the *News* by the four Elders who conversed with him. He says the heading is misleading; but that was not given by them, is not important, and is not here reproduced. He complains that he did not write the answers and that they were not submitted to him after being written. He admits that questions were submitted to and answered by him, but says "the form of them I do not remember." Altogether his objections are not of any moment and are too indefinite to weaken in any way the positive and united testimony of four unimpeachable witnesses. The chief point established by that evidence is that Joseph Smith does not claim to have been ordained, appointed or designated by his martyred father to any office in the Priesthood or authority in the Church. Let his misguided supporters and his deceived followers read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the proof furnished by the son of Joseph the Prophet himself.